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SUBJECT: DRC ELECTIONS: CARTER CENTER COMMENDS "ORDERLY AND PEACEFUL" VOTE

REF: A. KINSHASA 1673

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1677

[1](#)C. KINSHASA 1683

[1](#)1. (U) Former Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark released a preliminary statement by the Carter Center on the October 29 DRC elections at a press conference November 1 in Kinshasa. The Carter Center congratulated the Congolese people for an orderly and peaceful vote, and credited the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) for significant improvements since the July legislative and first-round presidential election. The Center's delegation, led by Clark and Associate Executive Director John Stremlau, included 45 observers from 14 countries deployed in Kinshasa and the other ten DRC provinces.

[1](#)2. (U) The statement characterized the election as "a major success," and praised poll workers for "very well executed" administration of the process. The Carter Center noted a significant improvement in the quality of electoral administration since July and was pleased to find that the CEI had adopted many of the Center's recommendations following the first round. Although implementation of the new measures wasn't universal, the Center said the personal engagement of CEI Director Abbe Malu Malu ensured that most poll workers were aware of the changes.

[1](#)3. (U) The Center noted that the transparency and integrity of the process were improved by new steps to ensure party witnesses received official copies of the results of the presidential polling. However, the Center reported that party witnesses were fewer in areas of the opposing candidate's greatest strength and that some witnesses did not wait to receive copies of the results. During the press conference, Clark replied to a question about the absence of witnesses, saying "If someone did not have a witness in place, they should not complain."

[1](#)4. (U) Carter Center observers expressed concern about negative campaign practices such as hate speech, inequitable and politically-biased media coverage, the absence of formal debate, and the sabotage of campaign materials and communication assets. The statement said these problems would need to be corrected for future DRC elections to reach "internationally-accepted standards." The Center also suggested that the absence of public campaigning may have contributed to lower voter turnout. In the statement, the Center called on candidates to take responsibility for the actions of their followers and said an "unequivocal public message" by political leaders calling for calm "would be welcome now."

¶5. (U) On election day, Carter Center observers witnessed well-informed elections officials, good coverage by party witnesses, and fewer problems such as improper assistance in the polling booth provided to illiterate voters. The observers reported that an overwhelming majority of elections officials performed their responsibilities in a "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory" manner. Despite infrastructural difficulties such as poor lighting or lack of protection from the elements, most polling centers opened on time, posted voter lists outside their doors, and more closely perused voter identification cards than during the July elections.

¶6. (U) The Center cited the serious incidents of violence (reftels) in Bumba and Bikoro (Equateur province) and in Fataki (Ituri District) and commended the CEI for responding quickly and appropriately to them. It called the attacks "isolated" and said they did not call into question the "overall integrity of the polls." The Center also praised police as being "visible, but not intrusive" at most polling locations.

¶7. (U) Carter Center observers called vote counting "consensual and properly implemented." The observers found election officials "well-informed" about appropriate procedures and what constituted a valid or invalid ballot. The Center urged the CEI to provide timely access to official results by polling stations and urged both sides to ensure proper measures of verifying vote tabulations.

¶8. (U) Carter Center observers will remain deployed throughout the DRC until tabulation is complete and hope to remain in the country long-term. The Center will issue

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further statements to complete their assessment of the second-round presidential vote.

¶9. (U) A copy of the statement has been transmitted to AF/C.
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